

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
DHA-02 SCS-03 SCA-01 CU-02 /083 W
-----080829Z 110806 /12

O R 080720Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY ANTANANARIVO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9312
INFO AMCONSUL CAPETOWN
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 ANTANANARIVO 1068

CAPETOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652:GDS
TAGS: PDIP, PFOR, MA, US
SUBJECT: CHARGE'S CALL ON JUSTIN RAKOTONIAINA, PRIME MINISTER
OF DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF MADAGASCAR (DRM)

REFS: (A) ANTANANARIVO 0971 (NOTAL), (B) STATE 123224 (NOTAL),
(C) ANTANANARIVO 0956 (NOTAL), (D) ANTANANARIVO 1055 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY. THE PRIME MINISTER TOLD ME ON JUNE 7 THAT HE
SAW NO REASON WHY THE US AND THE DRM SHOULD NOT HAVE GOOD
NORMAL RELATIONS. HE THOUGHT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR US TO
SETTLE THE PROBLEMS BETWEEN US AND SAID HE WAS READY AT ANY
TIME TO COOPERATE IN SUCH AN ENDEAVOUR. I REPLIED THAT I
WAS ALSO READY FOR SUCH AN EFFORT AND THAT I HOPED WE WOULD
BE ABLE TO SEE AN IMPROVEMENT OF US-MALAGASY RELATIONS,
CULMINATING IN A NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS. HE ALSO SAID
HE HOPED FOR SUCCESS OF US AND OTHER WESTER EFFORTS TOWARD
A SOLUTION OF THE PROBLEMS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA. ON THE LOCAL
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SCENE HE SAID HE WOULD BE WILLING TO HELP IN THE EMBASSY'S
SEARCH FOR A NEW SITE FOR THE AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER
AND ASSURED ME THAT, ALTHOUGH THE DRM COULD NOT, FOR REASONS
OF SECURITY, LET ME KNOW THE EXACT WHEREABOUTS OF THE
IMPRISONED AMERICAN CITIZEN, EDMOND LAPPEMAN, I HAD HIS
PERSONAL ASSURANCE THAT HE WAS BEING HELD IN COMFORTABLE
AND SECURE CIRCUMSTANCES AND THAT HE WAS IN GOOD HEALTH.

END SUMMARY.

2. I SAW THE PRIME MINISTER (PM) FOR OVER AN HOUR JUNE 7 AS A RESULT OF MY REQUEST MADE THROUGH THE FOREIGN MINISTRY FOR COURTESY CALLS ON ALL MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNMENT. HE RECEIVED ME CORDIALLY WITH SEVERAL PHOTOGRAPHERS PRESENT AND TOLD ME HOW HE HAD ENJOYED HIS PREVIOUS RELATIONSHIP WITH MY PREDECESSOR GIL SHEINBAUM AND PAO MIKE RAZI. HE PRAISED SHEINBAUM FOR THE ABILITY HE HAD SHOWN IN MAINTAINING GOOD PERSONAL RELATIONS WITH DRM OFFICIALS AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS EVEN WHEN BILATERAL RELATIONS WERE STRAINED. HE SAID THAT HE SAW NO REASON FOR NOT HAVING GOOD NORMAL US-DRM REALTIONS AND THAT HE WAS ALWAYS READY IN ANY EFFORTS TO BRING THEM ABOUT. HE THOUGHT FIRST STEP SHOULD BE THE SOLUTION OF PROBLEMS BETWEEN US.

3. I REPLIED THAT I WAS ALSO READY TO COLLABORATE IN ANY EFFORT TOWARD IMPROVED RELATIONS. I WAS WELL AWARE OF THE HIGH REGARD MY PREDECESSOR HAD FOR THE PM AND OF THE FACT THAT HE HAD BEEN HELPFUL TO THE EMBASSY IN SMOOTHING OVER RELATIONS AT DIFFICULT TIME. I HOPED I WOULD ENJOY THE SAME TYPE OF RELATIONS WITH HIM. I WAS READY TO SEEK SOLUTIONS TO BILATERAL PROBLEMS AND HOPED TO SEE A GRADUAL IMPROVEMENT AND EVENTUAL NORMALIZATION OF RELATIONS.

4. AS THE PM SEEMED TO BE WAITING FOR ME TO PURSUE THE CONVERSATION, I TOLD HIM THAT I HAD RECENTLY RECEIVED AN INSTRUCTION FROM WASHINGTON TO INFORM THE DRM AT A HIGH LEVEL OF OUR PRESENT EFFORTS REGARDING THE PROBLEMS OF CONFIDENTIAL

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SOUTHERN AFRICA AND THAT, IF HE AGREED, I WOULD USE THIS OCCASION TO DO SO EVEN THOUGH IT WAS AN INITIAL COURTESY VISIT. HE READILY AGREED AND LISTENED ATTENTIVELY AS I CARRIED OUT INSTRUCTION IN REF B, INTERJECTING SEVERAL QUESTIONS. I CONCLUDED BY SAYING THAT I HAD PERSONALLY APPRECIATED FACT THAT OFFICIALLY THE DRM SEEMED TO BE REFRAINING FROM THE CRITICISM HEARD ELSEWHERE OF THE AMERICAN, ENGLISH, AND WESTERN EFFORTS, CITING THE MALAGASY INTERVENTION AT MAPUTO AND THE RECENT DRM-MOZAMBIQUE COMMUNIQUE (REFS C AND D).

5. THE MINISTER REPLIED THAT HE WAS PLEASED TO HAVE THE OFFICIAL TEXT OF VP MONDALE'S PRESS CONFERENCE AND TO BE INFORMED OF OUR THINKING ON THE OUTCOME OF THE MONDALE-VORSTER MEETINGS AND THE PRESENT SITUATION. HE SAID THAT THE DRM AND MALAGASY PEOPLE WERE BOTH EMOTIONALLY INVOLVED IN THE AGONIZING PROBLEMS OF SOUTHER AFRICA AND AWARE OF THE EXTREMELY COMPLICATED NATURE OF THESE PROBLEMS. THEREFORE, THE DRM WOULD BE UNTRUE TO ITS DEEPEST FEELINGS

IF IT WERE TO DENIGRATE THE EFFORTS OF ANY PARTY TO HELP
TOWARD RESOLVING THE SITUATION.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 ANTANANARIVO 1068

6. THE PM THEN WENT ON TO PRAISE THE ROLE OF
AMBASSADOR YOUNG IN THE ONGOING ACTIVITY REGARDING
SOUTHERN AFRICA. HE HAD NOT HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET
HIM AT ZANZIBAR BUT HAD SEEN HIM IN ACTION FROM A DISTANCE
AT THE AIRPORT ON HIS DEPARTURE, CARRYING ON AN ANIMATED
DISCOURSE WITH A GROUP OF AFRICAN STATESMEN. HE THOUGHT
AMBASSADOR YOUNG HAD SUCCEEDED IN QUICKLY ESTABLISHING
EFFECTIVE PERSONAL RELATIONS WITH MANY OF THE PRINCIPALS
INVOLVED AND THAT THIS WAS VERY IMPORTANT TO AFRICANS WHO
WERE QUITE SENTIMENTAL BY NATURE. HE ALSO THOUGHT YOUNG'S
TRIP TO SOUTH AFRICA HAD SERVED A USEFUL PURPOSE.

7. AS THE PM STILL SEEMED TO WAIT FOR ME TO LEAD THE
CONVERSATION, I TOLD HIM THAT ON THE BILATERAL PLANE I HAD
BEEN EXTREMELY PLEASED TO SEE IN MADAGASCAR
WHAT AN ACTIVE ROLE WAS BEING PLAYED IN THE CAPITAL
BY THE AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER. I SAID THAT I CONSIDERED
IT PARTICULARLY VALUABLE AND IMPORTANT TO KEEP THIS CULTURAL
CONTACT GOING AT A TIME WHEN THERE WERE DIFFICULTIES
BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS AND THAT WE CONSIDERED, IN ALL
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MODESTY, THAT THE CENTER HAD MADE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TO THE CULTURAL LIFE OF THE CAPITAL. THE PM AGREED, SHOWING FULL AWARENESS OF THE CENTER'S RANGE OF ACTIVITIES, SAYING THAT HIS CHILDREN WENT THERE AND THAT HE HAD ATTENDED SOME OF ITS CONFERENCES. I THEN INFORMED HIM THAT WE HAD RECENTLY BEEN SERVED NOTICE BY THE OWNERS OF THE CENTER'S QUARTERS, THAT WE WERE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR ANOTHER LOCATION, AND THAT WE HOPED WE COULD COUNT ON THE DRM'S GOODWILL AND POSSIBLE ASSISTANCE IN CASE OF NEED IN THIS SEARCH. THE PM WAS SURPRISED TO HAVE THIS NEWS BUT RECALLED IN FACT THAT THE BUILDING WAS OWNED BY THE NATIONAL BANK FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT, WHICH INDEED NEEDED ADDITIONAL QUARTERS AS A RESULT OF A REORGANIZATION. HE SAID HE WOULD BE GLAD TO HELP IN ANY WAY HE COULD TO FIND NEW SUITABLE QUARTERS.

8. I THEN ASKED THE PM WHAT HIS THOUGHTS WERE ON OTHER TROUBLE SPOTS OF AFRICA SUCH AS THE HORN. HE PROFESSED GREAT CONFUSION OVER THE SITUATION IN THE HORN, BUT THEN SAID VERY EMPHATICALLY THAT THE VIOLENCE GOING ON IN ETHIOPIA WAS SHOCKING TO THE MALAGASY. THIS LET HIM INTO A DISCUSSION OF THE MALAGASY CHARACTER. HE SAID HIS COUNTRYMEN WERE INSULAR AND GENERALLY RESERVED AND SLOW TO GIVE THEIR FRIENDSHIP OR CONFIDENCE TO OTHERS. ONCE GIVEN, HOWEVER, THEY COMMITTED THEMSELVES FULLY. BUT THEN, IF BETRAYED, THEIR REACTIONS COULD BE EXTREME. HOWEVER, BASICALLY THEY WERE GENTLE AND THE VIOLENCE IN ETHIOPIA OR OTHER PARTS OF AFRICA WAS BEYOND THEIR COMPREHENSION. IT WAS BECAUSE OF THESE NATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS THAT THE DRM HAD BEEN ABLE TO CONDUCT A REVOLUTION WITH HARDLY ANY BLOODSHED AT ALL.

9. I ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE DRM HAD INDEED SHOWN ITSELF CORRECT IN DEALING WITH ITS OPPONENTS. THE PM SAID THAT THE OPPONENTS WERE WATCHED BUT AS LONG AS THEY DID NOTHING TO IMPEDE THE REVOLUTION THEY WERE LEFT IN PEACE.

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10. AS WE BEGAN TO TAKE OUR LEAVE OF EACH OTHER, THE PM SAID THAT HE WAS ALWAYS AT MY DISPOSAL SHOULD THERE ARISE A PROBLEM WHICH COULD NOT BE SOLVED AT A LOWER LEVEL OF THE DRM. I TOOK THE OCCASION TO MENTION THE IMPRISONED AMERICAN EDMOND LAPPEMAN, WHO HAS RECENTLY BEEN MOVED FROM THE CENTRAL PRISON TO AN UNNAMED LOCATION. I TOLD THE PM THAT SINCE THIS MOVE HAD BEEN MADE FOR SECURITY REASONS, I WOULD NOT INSIST AT THIS TIME ON KNOWING LAPPEMAN'S EXACT LOCATION AND I WOULD THEREFORE ACCEPT THE TEMPORARY FORCED

SUSPENSION OF OUR WEEKLY VISITS. ON THE OTHER HAND I WOULD APPRECIATE ASSURANCES THAT HE WAS BEING HELD IN APPROPRIATE CIRCUMSTANCES AND EVENTUALLY WE WOULD WANT TO RESUME OUR VISITS. I ALSO REITERATED OUR INTEREST IN PROMPT AND IMPARTIAL JUSTICE. THE PM ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE DRM HAD BEEN OBLIGED TO TAKE CERTAIN STEPS REGARDING LAPPEMAN BUT GAVE ME HIS PERSONAL ASSURANCE THAT HE WAS IN PERFECT SECURITY, IN COMFORTABLE CIRCUMSTANCE, AND IN GOOD HEALTH.

11. COMMENT: LIKE MY PREDECESSOR SHEINBAUM I FOUND PM A PLEASANT AND ARTICULATE PERSON WITH AN EVIDENT PERSONAL INTEREST IN SMOOTHING OVER ANY US-DRM PROBLEMS. I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH WEIGHT THIS PERSONAL VIEW CARRIES IN THE OVERALL POSTURE OF THE DRM; WE HAVE HEARD RUMORS THAT HE MAY BE ONE OF THE MINISTERS DISCARDED IN THE RESHUFFLE EXPECTED AFTER THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS. I SHOULD FIND OUT MORE ABOUT THE DRM ATTITUDE VERY SOON, AS I AM TOLD MY REQUEST FOR AN APPOINTMENT WITH PRESIDENT RATSIRAKA WILL SHORTLY BE GRANTED.BARRETT

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Message Attributes

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